



HEALTH ADVISORY #46

USE OF FINGERSTICK DEVICES ON MORE THAN ONE PERSON POSES RISK FOR TRANSMITTING BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS (PUBLIC HEALTH CLINICAL REMINDER)

(Ref: <http://www.cdc.gov/injectionsafety/Fingerstick-DevicesBGM.html>)

TO: West Virginia Healthcare Providers

FROM: Catherine C. Slemp, MD, MPH, Acting State Health Officer
West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health

DATE: April 21, 2011

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY HEALTH PROVIDERS, HOSPITAL-BASED PROVIDERS, INFECTION PREVENTIONISTS, LABORATORY DIRECTORS, LONG TERM CARE, ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES, AND OTHER APPLICABLE PARTNERS

OTHER RECIPIENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO APPLICABLE MEMBERS, STAFF, ETC.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has become increasingly concerned about the risk for transmitting hepatitis B virus (HBV) and other bloodborne pathogens to persons undergoing fingerstick procedures for blood sampling to monitor blood glucose levels. This notice serves as a reminder that fingerstick devices should never be used for more than one person.

Reports of HBV outbreaks linked to diabetes care have been increasing. Investigations have shown that the shared use of fingerstick devices is one of the common root causes of exposure and infection in settings such as long-term care (LTC) facilities, health fairs, or other settings where multiple persons require assistance with blood glucose monitoring.

CDC and the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health recommend that anyone performing fingerstick procedures in any setting should review the following practices to ensure that they are not placing persons in their care at risk for infection:

- Fingerstick devices should **never** be used for more than one person.
- Auto-disabling **single-use** fingerstick devices should be used in any setting where assisted monitoring of blood glucose is undertaken.

Protection from infections, including bloodborne pathogens, is a basic requirement and expectation anywhere healthcare is provided. For information about preventing infections in healthcare settings see: <http://www.cdc.gov/hai/>. For information specific to this clinical alert, please see: <http://www.cdc.gov/injectionsafety/Fingerstick-DevicesBGM.html> Please contact the Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at 304-558-5358 for questions.

This message was directly distributed by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health to local health departments and professional associations. Receiving entities are responsible for further disseminating the information to the targeted audiences noted.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance, warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation. May not require immediate action.

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